

Coping with self-isolation



Many of us are feeling anxious as we navigate the uncertainty of corona virus (COVID-19).

Here the DISCOVER team have outlined some advice and tips to cope during this period of uncertainty and isolation.

Stay Calm

- If you're feeling anxious plan a 'safe space' in your home that you'll go to.
- Try looking at the sky out of the window or from your doorstep – this can help give you a sense of space if you're feeling claustrophobic or trapped. Open any windows and let fresh air in.
- If reading about washing your hands is making you feel stressed or anxious, don't keep re-reading the same advice, let other people know you're struggling, set limits for washing your hands (20 seconds) & plan something to do after washing your hands.
- Breathing exercises can help you cope and feel more in control, such as the ones on "Calm".
- Try to keep active and build physical activity into your routine.
- Find ways to relax and be creative (e.g. arts and crafts, DIY, colouring, mindfulness, playing musical instruments, writing, yoga, meditation).
- Call someone, play a game or watch something you enjoy.

Stay Organised

- Find the right place to stay and work but remember to regularly change the rooms you spend time in and pencil in breaks.
- Decide on your routine and plan how you'll spend your time – write it down on paper and put it on the wall. Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible.
- If you live with other people, it may help to agree on a household routine and try and respect each other's privacy and give each other space.
- Find ways to spend your time, it could be a great chance to have a clear out! Write letters or emails, or make phone calls with people you've been meaning to catch up with.
- Keep your mind stimulated – FutureLearn and OpenLearn have free online courses.



Social Media Advice

- Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that could cause you to feel anxious or distressed. If you want updates, only seek information and updates at specific times.
- Have breaks from social media and mute threads or hide posts which may contribute to you feeling overwhelming. Feel free to unfollow accounts and mute Whatsapp groups that make you feel anxious.
- Seek information instead to take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones.

Stay Connected

- Agree regular check-in times and feel connected to the people around you.
- Remember you can video chat, watch shows / do activities separately and discuss them, or send emails to a friend.
- Strike a balance between having a routine and making sure each day has some variety
- Ring someone if you are unable to see them.
- Continue to access nature and sunlight wherever possible.
- Think about putting extra pictures up of the people you care about or listen to a chatty radio station or podcast if it feels too quiet.
- Schedule in down time if you are working from home to avoid burnout.
- MIND's online peer support community called Elefriends, where you can share your experiences with others (<https://www.elefriends.org.uk/>)

Practical Tips

- Keep things your environment at home clean and tidy.
- If you share your home with others, decide together how you'll use different spaces and discuss what each person needs to feel comfortable.
- Eat well with a balanced diet and stay hydrated. Keep taking your medication and ask your pharmacist if your medication can be delivered. Call 111 if you are worried about accessing medication.
- Continue accessing treatment and support if possible: ask about having appointments by phone, text or online if you face-to-face appointments are not possible.
- If you have care needs, your Local Authority should have policies for this situation and should tell you how they can meet your needs.

Useful organisations and links:

